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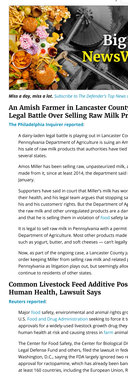
Amish Farmer in Lancaster County in Legal Battle Over Selling Raw Milk Products + More

2021-05-14

The Defender's Big Food NewsWatch brings you the latest headlines related to industrial food companies and their products, including other processed foods, food additives, genetically modified foods and fast food. Opinions expressed in this column are those of the author or the news organization cited and may not necessarily reflect the views of Children's Health Defense.

By The Defender Staff



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An Amish Farmer in Lancaster County Is in a Legal Battle Over Selling Raw Milk Products

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported:

A dairy-laden legal battle is playing out in Lancaster County, where the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is suing an Amish farmer to stop his sale of raw milk products that authorities have tied to illnesses in several states.

Amos Miller has been selling raw, unpasteurized milk, as well as products made from it, since at least 2014, the department said in a lawsuit filed in January.

Supporters have said in court that Miller's milk has worked wonders for their children's health and have argued that stopping sales is a violation of his and his customers' rights. But the Department of Agriculture says that the raw milk and milk-based products are a danger to public health and that he is selling them in violation of food safety laws.

It is illegal to sell raw milk in Pennsylvania for human consumption, but the Department of Agriculture. Most other products made from raw milk — such as yogurt, butter, and soft cheeses — can legally be sold in the state.

Now, as part of the ongoing case, a Lancaster County judge has issued an order keeping Miller from selling any raw milk products pending a trial. Pennsylvania as litigation plays out, but seemingly allowing sales to continue to residents of other states.

Common Livestock Feed Additive Poses Risks to Human Health, Lawsuit Says

Reuters reported:

Major food safety, environmental and animal rights groups have sued the U.S. Food and Drug Administration seeking to force it to reconsider approvals for a widely-used livestock growth drug that is poised to bring human health at risk and causing stress in farm animals prior to slaughter.

The Center for Food Safety, the Center for Biological Diversity, the Animal Legal Defense Fund and others, filed the lawsuit in federal court in Washington, D.C., saying the FDA violated its own requests to review its approval for ractopamine, which has already been banned or restricted in at least 160 countries, including the European Union, according to the lawsuit.

The only formal study to date of ractopamine's impacts on human health was cut off early after participants experienced significant increases in heart rate after receiving low doses, according to the lawsuit.

The drug is added to animal feed to promote muscle growth in as many as 80% of U.S. pigs, as well as in turkeys and cows, the groups said.

The groups said the FDA's own files contain reports that ractopamine and similar drugs cause nausea, dizziness, respiratory problems and heart attacks in humans and is inhaled or ingested by farm workers or people who consume meat from animals whose feed contains the drug.

U.S. Appeals Court Kills Ban on Plastic Containers Contaminated With PFAS

The Guardian reported:

A federal appeals court in the U.S. has killed a ban on plastic containers contaminated with high toxic PFAS "forever chemicals" found to leach at alarming levels into foods, connecting to household cleaners, pesticides and other products across the economy.

Houston-based Inhance manufactures an estimated 200m containers annually with a process that creates, among other chemicals, PFOA, a toxic PFAS compound. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in December prohibited Inhance from using the manufacturing process.

But the conservative Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals court overturned the ban. The judges did not deny the containers' health risks but said the EPA could not regulate the buckets under the statute it used.

The rule requires companies to alert the EPA if a new industrial process creates hazardous chemicals. Inhance has produced the containers for decades and argued that its process is not new, so it is not subject to the regulations. The EPA argued it does not have to prove a new process created PFOA in 2020, so it could be regulated as a new use, but the court disagreed.

PFAS are a class of about 15,000 compounds used to make products resistant to water, stains and heat. They are known as 'forever chemicals' because they do not naturally break down, and they have been linked to cancer, high cholesterol, liver disease, kidney disease, fetal complications and other serious health problems.

Inside Bayer's State-by-State Efforts to Stop Pesticide Lawsuits

Civil Eats reported:

On TikTok, lowa State Representative Megan Srinivas is angry. "To me," she says, pointing at herself with both hands, her eyebrows raised, "how's farmers' market more than corporate interests."

Srinivas, a Democrat, posted the video on February 7 to draw attention to a bill that was just starting to make its way through the statehouse. If passed, the legislation could prevent individuals who use pesticides from suing manufacturers based on the argument that the manufacturer should have warned them the products could cause cancer or another illness.

Srinivas is a physician, and one specific concern added to her outrage. Less than a year earlier, the Iowa Cancer Registry released data showing lowa now has the second highest cancer rate in the country, after Kentucky, and that in many other areas significantly increased between 2015 and 2019. For the first time, researchers at the Iowa Cancer Consortium have a plan to evaluate whether the incredible volume of weed- and bug-killers used in the state is a contributing factor (although an annual report released in early February 8 found more no-high rates of lung and blood drinking).

However, while other states have paid out more than 100,000 lawsuits brought by individuals claiming Roundup — the most widely used commercial product that contains the weedkiller glyphosate—had caused their cancers, lowa stands apart. Especially in agriculture, most people trust the safety of pesticides, locals say, and Roundup is the most common and coveted.

How Worried Should We Be About Artificial Food Dyes? Here's What Science Has (and Hasn't) Confirmed.

HuffPost reported:

A lawmaker in California recently unveiled a proposal to ban foods from schools if they contain artificial dyes, including Blue 1, Blue 2, Green 3, Red 40, Yellow 5 and Yellow 6, as well as titanium dioxide. This could apply to sports drinks, breakfast cereals, chips and candy. Separately, California Gov. Gavin Newsom recently signed a law banning the sale of foods and drinks with certain ingredients, including Red No. 3.

In the U.S., the Food and Drug Administration is responsible for performing safety checks and issuing guidance for food manufacturers on which dyes are and aren't safe for consumption. Though experts say that food dye use is generally safe, there's growing concern about consuming the colorings. Outside of the U.S., for example, further restrictions are imposed. The Guardian reported that in the European Union and the United Kingdom, "food containing synthetic dyes must carry warning labels" indicating the ingredients "may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children."

Some studies have linked synthetic food dyes to health issues, such as hyperactivity in children and cancer. And people want to know where their food comes from.

It's also been suggested that some food dyes cause cancer, but most research on the topic has used animal subjects, and the evidence is inconclusive. However, Red 3 has been shown to increase the risk of thyroid tumours in rats—and the FDA banned the dye in 2025 in cosmetics and externally applied drugs. However, the dye is still used in foods like some candy and popsicles, but it's required to be listed on food labels.

Here's What's Really Going on With Skyrocketing Food Prices

FoodsWine reported:

Since the pandemic began, the Federal Reserve says grocery prices have risen 25%, leaving consumers — and even President Biden — fuming over food costs. And supermarkets and big box stores are scrambling to reverse that perception.

Between January 2020 and January 2024, wholesale prices for food rose an estimated 20.4%. Though they've come down since 2023, wholesale costs are at the second-highest level of the past 15 years, according to the government's Producer Price Index for commodities.

Donald Grimes2, a regional economics specialist at the University of Michigan, already showed that prices for processed foods rose 23% in the four-year period from 2020 to 2024 and are the second highest it's ever been in the past 40 years.

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Alzheimer's Risk May Be Cut by 27% by Simple Diet Plan

Newsweek reported:

A simple dietary intervention may reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's and related dementias, a new study suggests.

Dementia risk is determined by a variety of genetic and environmental factors, many of which we are only just beginning to understand. One of the many potential factors that appear to influence our risk of neurodegeneration is diet.

Among healthy dietary patterns, the Mediterranean diet repeatedly demonstrates improvements in mental and physical performance, with several studies suggesting that adherence to this diet can delay or even prevent dementia.

Strict adherence to a Mediterranean diet was associated with an 11 percent reduction in all dementias among older adults. The association was even stronger when only Alzheimer's disease was considered, with strict adherence to a Mediterranean diet being associated with a 27 percent reduced risk of Alzheimer's.

Got Raw Milk? UCLA Professor of Medicine Says 'No Thanks'

Mercola.com reported:

During the last few years, bureaucrats and public health officials have been quiet about raw milk, but their laws have legalized its sale in lieu. The accompanying publicity — in The New York Times and USA Today, plus many other publications — has resulted in a flurry of pro-pasteurization, anti-raw milk Internet posts.

One of these appeared on December 8, 2023,3 written by Claire Panosian Dunavan, professor emeritus of medicine and infectious diseases at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and past president of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. Dunavan called her article on the "risky allure" of raw milk. It is buyer's faith in nature's perfect food or sellers' pure, naked greed?" she asks.

About raw milk safety, Dunavan repeats the recent claim that people who drink raw milk are 840 times more likely to contract food-borne illness than those who don't. But an analysis by epidemiologist Peg Coleman, based on data compiled by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), found that on a per annum basis, out of 23 foods considered, pasteurized milk ranked second to last and raw milk ranked seventh highest in causing severe illness. The real question that one must ask, however, is how accurate are reports of illness and death from raw milk?

According to the late Dr. Ted Beals, who analyzed reports of foodborne illness from 1999 to 2011, government data reported an average of 42 illnesses from raw milk per year out of 99,771 illnesses from all sources.

Using these figures, Dr. Beals concluded that one is 35,000 times more likely to become ill from other foods than from raw milk. Beals also noted that there is no way to quantify whether any one food is safer than another from the data we have, but at the same time, it is clear that there is no basis for singling out raw milk as "extremely dangerous."

Does Decaf Coffee Contain a Harmful Additive? Advocates Want to Ban a Certain Chemical in the Brew

STAT News reported:

There's a fight brewing over the future of decaf coffee.

Consumer health advocates are petitioning the Food and Drug Administration to ban a key chemical, methylene chloride, used to decaffeinate coffee beans. While the chemical is almost entirely removed during the decaffeination process, advocates say that a little-known nearly 66-year-old federal law mandates that the agency ban the additive since it has been proven to cause cancer in rodents.

Methylene chloride, a stress-harvested counter paint stripper, is used by nearly all of the major coffee companies in the U.S., including Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts, according to data compiled by the advocacy group Clean Label Project. The ingredient acts as a solvent, bending to caffeine in coffee beans so it can be discarded.

EU Pumps Four Times More Money Into Farming Animals Than Growing Plants

The Guardian reported:

The EU has made polluting diets "artificially cheap" by pumping four times more money into farming animals than growing plants, research has found.

More than 80% of the public money given to farmers through the EU's common agriculture policy (CAP) went to animal products in 2013 despite the damage they do to society, according to a study in Nature Foods. Factoring in animal feed doubled the subsidies that were embodied in a kilogram of beef, the meat with the biggest environmental footprint, from €0.71 to €1.42 (£0.63 to £1.22).

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Jaybird56
a day ago
It's very simple. Any food that is healthful must be banned in favor of mass-produced, toxic garbage. Otherwise, people might actually begin to get healthy and then they won't need Big pharma's poisons.
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HappilyMedia
a day ago
Support Amos Miller directly as well as other traditional farmers by shopping at farmersmarkets.com/#/AMS
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Paul Pepard
a day ago
Re: PFAS...check how much, page 9...
https://www.mass.gov/doc/2...
Re: Food prices, only CO #2...this must be some kind of joke ! 😂
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Ron Evans
Paul Pepard
a day ago
Paul pennyroyal no doubt is an average. Some things have gone up more and some less than the average.
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eva32
a day ago
How is it that PA shows the sale of raw milk (except for this Amish farmer), but not yogurt, butter, soft cheeses? Yogurt and cheese go through processes that would negate any bad bacteria.
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